

Subcommittee Passes FY08 Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations Bill

June 11, 2007 -- The House Commerce, Justice and Science and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired by Congressman Alan B. Mollohan (D-WV), today marked up the subcommittee's fiscal year 2008 bill. Chairman Mollohan's statement appears below:

"This bill provides a total of \$53.6 billion for fiscal year 2008 for the departments and agencies under our jurisdiction. Although we received what seems to be a relatively healthy allocation - of which I'm greatly appreciative - the President's budget request included many holes that we had to fill. The largest of these holes was law enforcement. The President's request for State and Local Law Enforcement was \$1.4 billion below the FY 2007 level. Because of the importance of this program to all Members, we not only funded it above last year's level, we provided \$1.7 billion more than the President's request.

"According to the Unified Crime Report of Crime Data from more than 11,700 state and local law enforcement agencies, violent crime -- murders, robberies, forcible rapes and aggravated assaults -- increased 1.3 percent in 2006 and 2.3 percent in 2005. These are the first significant increases in violent crime in 15 years.

"At a time when state and local law enforcement agencies are being stressed by a resurgence of violent crime, they have also, since September 11, 2001, been expected to take on increased homeland security responsibilities.

"Most violent crime falls under the jurisdiction of State and Local Law Enforcement, therefore the committee provides \$3.2 billion to State and Local Law Enforcement for crime fighting and prevention initiatives, 53 percent above the President's request and 10 percent above the fiscal year 2007 level. This restores State and Local programs to their fiscal year 2004 level, a major step in reversing the downward trend in funding for these programs.

"Among these programs, the committee strongly believes that Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) programs play a critical role in crime prevention and suppression. Within the \$725 million provided for COPS, \$100 million is made available to restart the COPS hiring program, to put more than 2,800 police officers on the streets to fight crime. The COPS hiring program helped to reduce crime nationwide in the decade between 1995 and 2005. The bill provides the funding for COPS hiring for the first time since 2005.

"Within

the rising crime statistics, crimes related to methamphetamine use underscore that drug's scourge on society. As meth use rises so too does crime, and according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's national survey on drug use and health, in 2005 almost 1.3 million persons aged 12 and older had used methamphetamine in the past year and 512,000 had used methamphetamine in the past month. The survey also indicated that the number of past month methamphetamine users who met the criteria for illicit drug dependence or abuse increased from 164,000 users in 2002 to 257,000 in 2005.

"According

to the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), 80 percent of all methamphetamine consumed in the United States is produced in laboratories located in Mexico or California, which is then distributed across the country using existing drug trafficking routes. To address this problem, the committee includes \$21,299,000 for southwest border methamphetamine enforcement.

"Small

domestic amateur labs, in home kitchens, motel rooms, or other similar spaces, continue to produce methamphetamine within the United States in large quantities. Since March 2005, the DEA Mobile Enforcement Teams (MET) have made methamphetamine investigations a priority. In Fiscal Year 2005, 41 percent of new MET deployments targeted methamphetamine trafficking organizations. However, the President's request for fiscal year 2008 terminates this program. We have rejected the President's proposal and have included \$20,578,000 for MET teams.

"In

addition, in order to help State and Local Law Enforcement, the recommendation restores funding for programs terminated by the administration: \$600,000,000 for the Justice Assistance Grants program, \$85,000,000 for meth-specific COPS grants, \$40,000,000 for Drug Court programs, and \$10,000,000 for State Prison Drug Treatment programs. These levels are significant increases over current year funding levels.

"In

this bill we fund activities to address the challenges of global warming. The bill funds \$1.9 billion worth of activities -- \$171 million more than the President's request. Now that the scientific community has determined that global warming and the resulting climate changes are real phenomena, we must identify steps to be taken and strategies to be adopted in response to global climate change.

"Some of the initiatives found in this bill addressing global climate change are:

1)

\$6 million for an investigation and study by the National Academy of Sciences. Before the investigation begins, a group of experts in this area will be convened to determine the scope of the study.

2)

funding to improve data associated with understanding global climate change. To improve our collection of data, funding is included for climate change sensors. The National Polar-Orbiting Operational Environmental Satellite System (NPOESS), which was created to examine both weather and climate - has been mismanaged and downsized. In past years, critically important climate sensors have been unfunded and removed from the NPOESS satellite. This bill provides funds to restore the development of some sensors.

"Additionally,

we have tried to think creatively about how we can best invest our dollars to address global warming. We have added monies for a global warming reduction incentive program at the Economic Development Administration. We have provided additional monies for the development of several earth science missions at NASA; we have increased the funding levels for several NOAA programs; we have provided funds for the creation of two new educational programs directed at climate change as recommended by the National Academies; and we have added funds to the Marine Mammal Commission for monitoring mammal adaptation to climate change.

"Another

priority area is science and innovation. If we are to maintain our leadership in science and technology and continue to be competitive in our global economy, we must invest robustly in research and development. This bill includes more than \$28 billion in competitive research and science education funding - almost a billion more than requested by the president.

"This

bill also provides funding for many priorities in the Department of Commerce. It includes just over \$4 billion for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration - approximately \$200 million over the President's request. The bill also includes \$500 million for the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), which is critical to the innovation agenda - an increase of \$137 million over the President's request. We have increased funding for the Economic Development Administration by more than \$100 million -- not only restoring the President's proposed cut, but working toward reversing a downward trend in funding for this program.

"This bill restores programs cut or eliminated by the President, including the Advanced Technology Program, the Manufacturing Extension program, and the Public Telecommunications Facilities program. And finally, this bill not only funds the critically important decennial census, but restores funding for the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) and the Community Partnerships, which have proved in past decennial censuses to have been essential to achieving accurate counts in certain hard to reach populations.

"In NASA, we have provided an increase of \$290 million above the President's request to restore cuts made by the Administration in the science, aeronautics and education portfolios. The committee also provides funding in a new account structure to add clarity to the budget. The new accounts are: science, aeronautics, exploration, education, cross-agency support programs, space operations, and the inspector general.

"In the President's request, the science, aeronautics, and education accounts were either cut or flat-funded. This bill provides \$180 million above the President's request in science to restore some of the program cuts. Almost \$150 million was added to the aeronautics account. We have also added \$64 million to NASA's education program, which was also severely reduced. In the exploration account, we provided the President's request.

"For the National Science Foundation, we agree with the need to fully fund science and innovation and even provided an increase -- \$72 million - for the Foundation's education programs. This level will continue the doubling of the National Science Foundation budget in ten years.

"We have made positive changes with some of the smaller agencies in this bill. I'm proud to say we have added \$28 million above the FY 07 level and \$66 million over the President's request for the Legal Services Corporation. We have also added \$5 million to the EEOC to reduce the backlog of pending cases and included a provision to eliminate the outsourcing of their call center. We have restored funding for the National Veterans Business Development Corporation, which was zeroed out in the President's request.

"Finally, we have a couple of legislative items in this bill: we have included two provisos concerning a-76. One provision prohibits the use of funds for public-private competitions for the employees of the Bureau of

Prisons and the other prohibits funds provided in this bill to be used to implement an OMB circular that does not allow federal employees the same appeals rights as contractors during job competitions. The bill language also continues a moratorium prohibiting NASA from implementing a reduction in force and from funding any research, development or demonstration activity related exclusively to Human Exploration of Mars. NASA has too much on its plate already, and the President is welcome to include adequate funding for the Human Mars Initiative in a budget amendment or subsequent year funding requests.

"There are so many worthwhile programs in this bill and not enough resources to adequately fund them. The difficult job of this appropriations subcommittee is made even more difficult when the President plays budget games by requesting insufficient amounts for critical programs such as State and Local Law Enforcement.

"Again, I believe that this bill represents a good first step to getting us back on track and funding the priorities of the American people."